

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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R 201403Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3490

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

S E C R E T TRIPOLI 0992

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: LY, EG, PFOR, SU

SUBJ: EGYPT/LIBYA

1. IN RELAXED MOOD ANTICIPATING HIS DEPARTURE AFTER SEVEN YEARS IN LIBYA WHICH BEGAN AS HEAD OF EGYPTAIN MILITARY MISSION, SENIOR LIBYA WATCHER OF TRIPOLI DIPLOMATIC CORPS SALAH AL-DIN AL-SAIADANI, HEAD OF THE EGYPTIAN RELATIONS OFFICE (AMBASSADOR) MADE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS ON LOCAL SCENE DURING RECENT MEETING WITH ME.
2. UNCERTAINTY, PARTICULARLY AMONG MERCHANTS AND BUSINESS GROUPS, OVER ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FUTURE CREATING MUCH TENSION AND HAS RESULTED IN A LARGE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS IN TRIPOLI'S MENTAL HOSPITAL.
3. SAIADANI'S TRANSFER HAD BEEN PLANNED SOME MONTHS AFTER HIS PERSONAL REQUEST TO SADAT. HE AND HIS FAMILY NEED A CHANGE AND THERE WAS CLEARLY NO HOPE OF CHANGING QADHAFI.
4. HE HAD NO CONCERN OVER BEING EXPELLED IN RETALIATION FOR EXPULSION OF THE ACTING LIBYAN AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO.

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PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE LIBYAN LEADERSHIP WAS

TOO DEEP AND TOO LONG STANDING TO PERMIT THE LIBYANS
TO MAKE SUCH A MOVE. AFTER ALL, AS A BRIGADIER HE IS
SENIOR TO LIBYAN LEADERSHIP.

5. EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN RELATIONS CONTINUE TO GO DOWN HILL
WITH NO HOPE WHATSOEVER FOR AN IMPROVEMENT UNDER CURRENT
LIBYAN LEADERSHIP. NOETHERLESS, HE WAS ALWAYS WELL
TREATED HERE AND PROVIDED ADEQUATE PROTECTION. HELP
QUICKLY ARRIVED AFTER INVASION OF HIS EMBASSY BY TWO
SUDANESE TERRORISTS, WHO HAD CAPTURED HIS CONSULAR OFFICER
ON JULY 5.

6. HE WAS UNSURPRISED ABOUT THE RECENT LIBYAN ASSISTED
COUP ATTEMPT IN SUDAN RECALLING HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS
MATTER WITH QADHAFI IN PREVIOUS YEARS. QADHAFI, HE SAID,
WAS ALWAYS ADAMANT THAT HE WOULD TOPPLE NUMAYRI NO
MATTER HOW MANY ATTEMPTS IT TOOK. QADHAFI HAD NEVER
FORGIVEN NUMAYRI'S REFUSAL IN 1973 TO ALLOW LIBYAN PLANES
AND TROOPS TO PROCEED TO UGANDA TO ASSIST AMIN.

7. QADHAFI'S SITUATION CONTINUES DETERIORATING EXTERNALLY
AND INTERNALLY. NEVERTHELESS CIVILIAN OPPOSITION WAS
POWERLESS AND REPRESENTED NO THREAT. WIDESPREAD
DISSIDENCE IN THE LIBYAN ARMED FORCES EXISTED BUT
QADHAFI'S SURVEILLANCE OF SUCH DISSIDENCE WAS CLOSE AND
CONTINUING AND MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR SUCH ELEMENTS
TO GATHER AGAINST QADHAFI. OF THE REMAINING RCC
MEMBERS ONLY MUSTAFA MUHAMMAD KHARUBI WAS A POTENTIAL
TREAT. KHARUBI, HOWEVER, HE SAID, WAS AN EXTREMELY
MERCURIAL TYPE. ONE WEEK HE WOULD DENOUNCE QADHAFI
AND THE NEXT WEEK WOULD SUPPORT HIM. IF KHARUBI STAYED
LONG ENOUGH HIS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT IN BOTH THE
COMMISSIONED AND NON-COMMISSIONED RANKS OF THE ARMY MIGHT
ENABLE HIM TO LEAD A SUCCESSFUL COUP. IN SUMMARY, SAIADANI
BELIEVES QADHAFI WILL CONTINUE FOR THE PRESENT BUT THAT
THE COMBINATION OF FOREIGN AND INTERNAL PRESSURES WILL
EVENTUALLY CAUSE SOME CHANGE.

8. BECAUSE OF LONG EXPERIENCE AND CLOSE TIES WITH LIBYAN
LEADERSHIP SAIADANI'S VIEWS ARE WORTHY OF NOTE.

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